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* " THE OLD BATTLE AXE " *
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* Property of Johnnie Speer *
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" THE OLD BATTLE AXE "

CAST

TOBY COMEDY

DOCTOR PUTTER CHARACTER COMEDY

MR. LADD LEAD

AUNT MIRANDA SAWYER CHARACTER OLD LADY

REBECCA SOUBRETTE LEAD.

SETTING

The front yard of Miranda Sawyer's home. Pretty
rural garden set. House on L. Bench down by house.

PROPS

Circulars

Bench

Small bag

Small stick

Letter.

THE OLD BATTLE AXE.

TOBY

Doggone working for old Miranda Sawyer sure aint no good job. Gee whiz! All I do is work and don't get nothin' after I do work. About every week the old she-devil cuts my wages down.

AUNT MIRANDA

(PETERS FROM HOUSE L.) Toby! What are you doing? Star gazing? What do you think I pay you for. Get a rake and clean up the yard. Spring time is here and it will soon be time for my spring cleaning. I'm only waiting for my niece to arrive, and then I'll see that things are fixed up around here.

TOBY

Is your niece going to live here?

MIRANDA

Yes! I've got to support her. Her good for nothing mother married a no account man, who died and left them head over heels in debt, and about fourteen children on her hands. Oh he was a goosgood man.

TOBY

Fourteen children and he aint no good. Son of a gun's darn good I think.

MIRANDA

He was a dreamer, impractical, and brainless. My sister married him, and now she's got her hands full trying to raise the brats. Of course Rebecca is the oldest of the children, and so they are going to send her here for me to send to school. Bah! I shouldn't let her have a thing when she gets here. Money is hard to get nowadays.

TOBY

Gee, whiz, you've got all the money there is in this part of the country. And you own half the land from here to Sedgewick County.. It's a cinch you aint payin' me no wages. I'm only getting five and quarter a week now you know.

MIRANDA

Which reminds me that I'm going to take a quarter off of your salary beginning with this week. I'm glad you reminded me of it.

TOBY

Why the heck didn't I keep my mouth shut? Hey! I can't live on five dollars a week. Gee whiz, I've got to keep my mother. Me and here aint even eatin' regular.

MIRANDA

Nonsense! You and your mother have been charity subjects in this town ever since I can remember---always taking but never giving. Your mother is like my sister---married to a lazy man who died and left nothing.

TOBY

You're crazy, my father left everything he had to charity--he left everything to the orphan's home here?

MIRANDA

And what did he have?

TOBY

Twelve children!

MIRANDA

Hump! Such nonsense! I wonder what time it is? My niece ought to be in on the morning train. The ignorant little heathen I suppose she'll arrive in some outlandish garb that will disgrace me before all the town.

TOBY

Gee! I sure feel sorry for her! Oh look here comes Mr. Ladd. Boy if more rich folks was like him this world would be better off.

MIRANDA

Indeed! He's a waster of money, and a perfect fool. He thinks he can buy my land away from me. I'll unload on him. (MR. LADD ENTERS R. U.) Well, good morning Mr. Ladd, I suppose you've come over to see me about buying that east end property of mine for the new Orphan's home. Well, no use talking. I won't have it.

MR. LADD

My dear Miss Sawyer, I would pay you well for the land.

MIRANDA

I don't want your money. Who wants an Orphan's home right next door to them with a bunch of noisy ragamuffins disturbing my quiet. Charity! Chairty! That's all I hear from m rning till night around here.

MR. LADD

Miss Sawyer, your heart is made of stone.

MIRANDA

Maybe so but my head is not made of bone like yours is. No use talking to me at all. I've got my charity to take care of. I've got to raise one of my sister's children. Have to send her to school. She's coming today. I suppose I'll be down in bed from it. Children make me so nervous.

MR. LADD

You should have had some children of your own then maybe you would feel better toward them.

MIRANDA

Oh wall, I suppose a child of my own would be different. Law sakes I'm too old now to even think about such things. A really little baby is cute, but when they grow up I can't stand 'em. If I only had a little baby about that big--(MEASURES)

TOBY

Well, could I be of any assistance to you?

MIRANDA

Toby! You hush your awful face! My land! Oh you just make me show my embarrassment right here in front of Mr. Ladd. Gracious! (EXITS HOUSE L)

TOBY

Did you see her embarrassment? I must have missed that? Say, Mr. Ladd, I got my wages but again today. She knocked off another quarter on me.

MR. LADD

The old tightwad. I sometimes wonder if Miranda Sawyer has any feelings ~~hkkkk~~ at all. (GIVE TOBY MONEY) Here Toby, I'll make up your salary deficiency. Well, I must be going. I'll have to drop around tho' and see her niece when she gets here. Give my regards to your mother, Toby. (EXITS R. U.)

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TOBY
Gee! He's sure a swell feller. I wish I'd told him Old lady Sawyer had cut my wages a dollar, that way I would make a profit. (EXITS L. U.)

DOCTOR PUTTER

(OFF STAGE) Whoa! Now stay there, darn ye critters. Come on, little girl give me your hand, I'll give you a boost. This is the home of your aunt Miranda Sawyer. The durnest old battle axe that ever lived, but you can't help but like the old girl. (ENTERS WITH REBECCA) So you're going to live here with your aunt?

REBECCA

Yes--I--there were so many in my family that my mother had to send me her to live with here so I can go to school and get an education. We've got fourteen including me. I've taken care of babies ever since I can remember because I'm the oldest one. But our families all finished now. So my mother says, and mother always keeps her promise. Why there hasn't been any children in our family since father died.

DOCTOR

Well, I declare! That's a pretty little purse you have there.

REBECCA

Do you like it? Mother gave it to me. I've got twenty five cents in it and it has got to last me two whole months for writing paper and stamps. Say do you know my Aunt Miranda very well?

DOCTOR

Well, I've been her physician for years. Your Aunt Miranda is a fine woman, but she has her ways. (MIRANDA ENTERS UNNOTICED BY THEM) Now the old girl is all right, but she's mean and set in her ways. Why about twenty five years ago she could have married me, and been happy, but instead she'd rather be a sour old maid that every body hates, and--- (SEES MIRANDA) Well, howdy do, Miss Sawyer, I was just telling your niece what a nice aunt she had.

MIRANDA

Indeed! I overheard what you said, Doctor Putter. So you are Rebecca. Well, come with me, and I'll show you to your room. Take your parcels with you and you won't have to come back after them. Always use your head and save your heels. Clean your feet up on the rug there and hang your hat up as you go past.

REBECCA

Do you mind if I keep it in my room; it's always safer?

MIRANDA

There aint no thieves around here and if they was they wouldn't want that. Now I want you to remember to always use the back stairs. We don't ever use the front one on account of the carpet. Law sakes! Turn around and let me look at you. I declare to goodness you got your dress on hindsides afore.

REBECCA

Hindsides foremost? Oh no, Auntie, that's the way it's made. If you had fourteen children to dress you couldn't keep buttoning ~~hindsides~~ and unbuttoning them all of the time. We are always buttoned up the front at our house. Miranda is only three years old but she is buttoned up the front too. Please, Aunt Miranda, can I write a letter to my mother and tell her that I got here all right?

MIRANDA

I suppose you may. You got your own paper and stamps have you?

Yes, and my own pencil too.

MIRANDA

Well, then you may write your fool head off. Wipe your feet off and don't go up the front stairs. (TURNS AND BUMPS INTO DOCTOR) Well, Doctor Putter did you want anything in particular?

DOCTOR

No, I--I just brought your niece from the depot she didn't know how to get here. I---Miranda, now that you've got a little girl to raise you ought to have a father for her---

MIRANDA

Yes, well, when I want a man around my house, I'll get a real man it won't be some dried up old fossil of a quack doctor. Come, Rebecca! (THEY EXIT INTO THE HOUSE)

DOCTOR

I'd like to get that old buzzard to marry me, just to tame her down. If I'd a had her twenty five years ago, today she'd be a different woman.

***** NUMBER ONE *****

REBECCA

(ENTERS AFTER NO. WITH LETTER) Now I've got my letter all written to my mother and brothers and sisters back home and I feel so lonely. Seems like there's nobody wants me here. Aunt Miranda is so stern. If it wasn't for good Doctor Putter, I'd just want to go right back home and I wouldn't care if I never got educated or we paid off the mortgage on our home. (TOBY ENTERS BACKING ON) Oh, hello!

TOBY

Gosh, you might as well kill a fellow as scare him to death.

REBECCA

I didn't mean to scare you. Who are you?

TOBY

I'm Toby Abigiah Flagg.

REBECCA

Abijiah ~~Flagg~~ what?

TOBY

Abijiah Flagg.

REBECCA

Gee, that's a funny name. Makes me think of arbor day, and the star spangled banner. (LAUGHS) Do you live here?

TOBY

No, I just work here for old Miranda Sawyer. She started me in a ten dollars a week working for her, and now she's cut me down to five bucks. What-er you doing here?

REBECCA

Oh I'm Staying here too. I'm Rebecca of Sunnybrook farm. I'm going to stay here and go to school.

¹₄ TOBY
Oh I know you now, but your name aint Rebecca; it's Heathen.

REBECCA
Taint!

TOBY
Tae!

REBECCA
Taint heathen; it's Rebecca Rowena Randle.

TOBY
Well, I heard your aunt say that young heathen is coming here, that's all I know about it. So I'm going to call you heathen.

REBECCA
Well, if you call me heathen, I'll call you Star Spangled Banner. Come over here and sit down.

TOBY
I--I can't!

REBECCA
Why?

TOBY
Cause I'm scared.

REBECCA
Scared of a girl? I won't hurt you!

TOBY
It aint you I'm scared of; it's your aunt Miranda. She'd just as soon bat you one between the eyes as look at you.

REBECCA
You aren't very sociable are you, Abijiah?

TOBY
Sociable nothing--I went to one of them over to the brethern church once. I---I had a girl I used to go with and I lost her at one of them ice-cream sociables. She just got sore at me, and we aint never spoke.

REBECCA
Why, Toby, what did you do?

TOBY
I didn't get a chance to do nothin'. You see they was all dancin' and havin' a good time, and my girl had been dancin' a whole lot, and I went over to her and asked for a dance and she said she didn't want to dance. I said, "Well, I guess you're too danced out." and she got sore right away.

REBECCA
Why, Toby?

TOBY
She thought I said, "I guess you're too damn stout." I've lost more durn women in my time. I'm just about off of 'em. They get mad too easy. Now I had one girl I used to go with a whole lot, but we don't go round no more.

REBECCA
You mean you've parted?

TOBY
Yep, she wantthatnway and I went this way.

REBECCA
Well, that's too bad. So you've really severed your relations?

TOBY
Aint nothing wrong with my relations; it's hers.

REBECCA
Well, did you do something to her you shouldn't have?

TOBY
No, she just said something and I just said something--she went that way--I went this way--we don't go round no more.

REBECCA
What did she say?

TOBY
She said her father was feeling bad.

REBECCA
And what did you say?

TOBY
I said, what's the matter with him? and she said, "He's sick." "He's got loco moto ataxia--and well, we just don't go round no more.

REBECCA
Now wait a minute. When your girl told you that her father had loco-moto ataxia, what did you say?

TOBY
Nothin'. I jest asked her--I jest asked-her--

REBECCA
Yes! Yes!

TOBY
I jest asked her, "Does he whistle at crossings ? "

REBECCA
Oh, Toby, I'm going to enjoy talking to you--you're soo --so funny, I like to talk to people and tell them my trouble . I guess I'm homesick. Were you eger home-sick?

TOBY
Nope! Never had no home to be sick over. You see my father died a long time ago, and my mother lives way down below the bend, and it's so far that I can only see her once a week. She's poor and I have to work for your aunt so we can live, and when you work for her you don't need no horse and wagon to carry your money.

REBECCA
Oh I'd love to give your mother something, but I've only got a quarter and it's got to last me three whole months for writing paper and stamps.

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TOBY

There's something down in the village that I've been wanting to get her for the last two years. It's a lamp the most beautiful lamp you ever saw. And it don't cost nothin'---it stands so high, and got a shade of all the colors that there is in the rainbow. Don't cost a cent, you only have to sell three hundred cakes of soap and they give it to you.

REBECCA

If you sell three hundred cakes of soap they'll give you the lamp. Toby, I'm going to get that lamp for your mother. You see if I don't.

MR. LADD

(ENTERS R. U. WITH MR. PUTTER) Well, Mr. Putter, how's the doctoring comin along? Say why don't you put a few good natured pills in old Miranda Sawyer.

DOCTOR

The old battle axe. I'd like to hear she'd croaked. Mr. Ladd, have you met the sweetest little girl that every lit on the Sawyer property. Here she is. Miss Rebecca Rowena Randle. Can you believe anything as good and kind as that would be related to old Miranda?

MR. LADD

Indeed I cannot. I am certainly pleased to meet you, Miss Rebecca.

REBECCA

(BOWS) I am pleased to meet you, Mr. --Mr. Ladd! I've heard my aunt speak of you. Oh I feel so much better now that I'm getting a chance to meet people. For awhile I was so lonely. Toby's been telling me about his mother down the bend.

MR. LADD

Oh how is your mother, Toby?

TOBY

Well, Ma's right smart, only she had a little rehematism last week. She fell down and hurt her back some, and Saturday she lost her false teeth down the well, when she was drawing a pail of water. She says she'll have to eat mush now because teeth are too expensive.

MR. LADD

Otherwise she would be all right, eh, Toby? You should try and get your mother a set of false teeth for her birthday. Maybe I'll help you. When is her birthday?

TOBY

Monday morning, fifteen minutes after eleven.

MR. LADD

Well, you've gotten it down pat. (GIVES HIM BILL) See if that will help to brighten her birthday, Toby. Now run along and the doctor and I will bring down a lot of other nice things later on.

TOBY

Gosh, this is going to be the happiest birthday Ma's had for a don't know when. (EXITS R. U.)

MR. LADD

Well, Doctor Putter, I wonder if we are ever going to be able to persuade Miranda into selling that land for the orphan's home. I wish there was some other suitable site but hers is the only one, and I think she knows it.

DOCTOR

Oh she's hard hearted. I've always felt though that somewhere there was some good in her. I believe if I'd of married her twenty five years ago - there I am telling my secret thoughts. But then maybe we can flatter her into selling that land. Here she comes now.

MIRANDA

(OFF STAGE CALLING) Rebecca! Rebecca! (ENTERS) Oh where are you? Oh you shiftless thing. Rebecca, while I was gone visiting with my neighbor you do everything I told you not to. You swept up the front stairs and muddled up the carpet. You left the screen out of the windows so the flies got all over the house. You never cleaned away your lunch things nor put away the dishes, you left the side door open from two till three and any one could have stolen the whole house away from under me.

REBECCA

I'm sorry, Aunt Miranda.

MIRANDA

No you ain't either. You're just a little rattle brained chatter box. (SEES THE TWO MEN) Well, what are you two pests doing over here. Come to talk about that property for the orphan's home you'd just as well go on your way. Mr. Ladd, you want all the land in the country, I guess. Remember to him that hath shall be given, and to him that hath not even that which he has shall be taken away." I've told you before I don't want noisy children next door to my home.

DOCTOR

Now, Miranda, you're not as hard hearted as you let on to be. Just think Miranda, children are the greatest thing in the world. Now you have been fortunate in having money and a good name in the community. Everyone looks up to you and respects you and--and Mr. Ladd, and I think you are a wonderfully accomplished woman. Your classic beauty--your rare ability

REBECCA

Sure, Auntie, the doctor thinks you are very accomplished. I heard him telling Mr. Ladd so. (INNOCENTLY) Say, Auntie, can you make a noise like a frog?

MIRANDA

Noise like a frog? Good heavens what question? Of course I can't make a noise like a frog. Why do you ask that?

REBECCA

Because I heard the doctor say that he would give fifty dollars to hear that you had croaked!

DOCTOR

Ow. Come on, Let's be going. (MR. LADD AND DOCTOR BOTH EXIT AS MIRANDA MAKES A PASS AT THEM)

MIRANDA

The old diabolitical hyposticator. Come in the house, Rebecca. (EXITS)

***** NUMBER TWO *****

DOCTOR

(ENTERS WITH MR. LADD) Well, Mr. Ladd, at last I've hit upon a plan to soften Old Miranda Sawyer's heart. If this doesn't work then I'll really give up. We're going to make her think that she's in very bad health. I'm going to tell her that her days on this earth are numbered.

MR. LADD

A good idea. Maybe when she finds that she is facing eternity, it will scare her. Every time that I see her from now I'm going to tell her how bad she looks, and that I think she is failing.

DOCTOR

(LAUGHING) Yes, and I'm going to get all the neighbors, and Toby and her Rebecca and all of us are going to begin feeling so sorry for her. Say before you know it I'll have her marrying me so I can be with her to administer a doctor's care as well as a husband's loving touch. I'm going in and see her. (STARTS TO DOOR. HOUSE. L. BUMPS INTO REBECCA) Well, Rebecca what are you doing? (EXITS L.)

REBECCA

Oh I'm practising how to sell soap. I'm going to help Toby win a lamp of his mother. I've got the soap and circulars and everything. I'm going to go around from house to house selling it. Mr. Ladd, you play like you're a customer, and I'll sell you a bar of soap. (SITS HIM DOWN) (GOES THROUGH PANTOMIME OF KNOCKING ON DOOR) Now you imagine that you're a housewife.

MR. LADD

That's going to call heavily upon my imagination. Now I'm a house-wife.

REBECCA

Yes, and your nursing your children.

MR. LADD

Wait a minute! I'll be a housewife, but I'm not going to nurse any children. I--I'm not built that way.

REBECCA

It's just make believe. Now when I knock on the door, you come to it, and say what do you want, then I begin. (BUS.) My dear madam, I would like to present you a remarkable soap--the best on the market--it is--called it is called. (LOOKS AT CIRCULAR) Wait till I see what it is called. Oh yes. The very poorest--Oh I mean purest ---not a single trace--this is soft soap. Even a baby can do the family washing with it.

MR. LADD

(LAUGHING) Now what does a little girl like you know about babies?

REBECCA

I know plenty. I raised three and a half of them. My littlest sister was only half raised when I came here to live with Aunt Mirandamao I could get an education and then get a job and earn money to pay off the mortgage on our farm. Of course if I was rich like you are I wouldn't have to worry about things like that.

MR. LADD

I used to have to worry about things just like that. In my younger days I had a pretty hard time of it.

REBECCA

What was your trouble?

MR. LADD

Lack of food and clothes, principally. What was yours?

REBECCA

No shoes--no books---and too many babies!

MR. LADD
(LAUGHS) Well, Rebecca, about this soap deal of yours. Let me see---you say you've got to sell three hundred cakes of it. Now I believe my aunt needs soap pretty badly.

REBECCA
Well, how much soap would your aunt want?

MR. LADD
Oh lots of lots of it, close to ~~three~~ hundred cakes.

REBECCA
Say does your aunt take in washing?

MR. LADD
No---but you just sell me the three hundred cakes of soap and then you can give Toby's mother the lamp for her birthday.

REBECCA
Oh, Mr. Ladd you wouldn't buy all of it a whole three hundred cakes would you. Say would your aunt approve of that?

MR. LADD
(SMILES) Of course. My aunt likes anything I do.

REBECCA
Mine doesn't.

MR. LADD
Rebecca, something tells me that you and are going to be good friends.
(TAKES HER HAND)How old are you, Rebecca.

REBECCA
Eighteen! I'm the first of a set of fourteen! I was the first installmen

MR. LADD
First installment?

REBECCA
Yes, Mother says that children are what gets women to heaven. So many children--so many installments on a happy home up there where my daddy is. How old are you?

MR. LADD
I'm twenty eight. Ten years older than you.

REBECCA
You wouldn't have been tho if my aunt Miranda hadn't kept my mother from marrying daddy as long she could. My mother had to run away to marry ~~him~~ my father. Aunt Miranda, thinks it's terrible but there's nothing ~~terrible~~ about love is there?

MR. LADD
No it is beautiful! Little, girl, beautiful. (PUTS ARMS AROUND HER)

MIRANA
(ENTERS WITH DOCTOR) Oh don't tell me, Doctor.--(SEES REBECCA AND MR. LADD)
What's going on here? Rebecca, I declare I believe you're out here speeining with Mr. Ladd. Didn't I tell you to do the dishes, and get the house-work done. Oh between this silly old fool trying to tell me that I don't feel well, and---

MR. LADD

Come to think of it, Miss Sawyer, you don't look very good today. Your eyes seem rather blood shot. I've noticed you several times, and I've felt so sorry for you.

MISCODR

Everyone has noticed it. Really, Miranda, I'm worried about you. Now you know I'm a doctor and I ought to know what's wrong with people. You're not a well woman. Look how your hands tremble, and stick out your tongue. (SHE STICKS OUT TONGUE) tttt! Miss Sawyer, I feel it my duty to tell you that your days on this earth are numbered. (LOOKS AT LADD AND WINKS)

MIRANDA

What!

REBECCA

Oh, Miranda, you do look kind of pale, and different.

MIRANDA

(BEGINNING TO GET SICK) Maybe I'm not feeling as well as I ought to. I-- I thought I felt all right this morning, but then maybe. --Oh it's all biffle. I don't believe I'm not well.

MR. LADD

Really, Miss Sawyer, I would advise you to let Doctor Putter take care of you. He wouldn't charge you much I'm sure.

MIRANDA

Well, there's anything the matter with me, I'll pay for it. I don't care for any charity. (FEELS HEAD) Oh I believe I've got a head ache now. I guess it's better for me to spend a dollar now than to have folks say how natural she looks."

TOBY

(ENTERS L.) Gee gawhs Miss Sawyer what's the matter with you? Gosh you look sick! Look at them big circles under your eyes. Gee, I hope you don't kick the bucket before pay day comes.

MIRANDA

Oh mercy! Doctor Putter, I'm begging to feel sick.

DOCTOR

Now, never you mind Miranda. I'll stick right by you until the end. Maybe I'd better not leave the place, in case you should die--

MIRANDA

(CRINGES) Don't say that. I don't want to die!

DOCTOR

Well, we're all going to do our best to save you! But if you should die-- now if you should---have you got your will made out?

MIRANDA

Oh it isn't that bad is it? Oh, dear, maybe I better go lay down. Toby, I want you to take care of my gold fish for me. Maybe you better move them in my bed room, and I want you to put the cat out doors.

TOBY

Well, I can't bring the gold fish in the house unless I bring the cat in there too.

Why?

TOBY

Because the gold fish are in the cat.

MIRANDA

What! Did that cat eat my good gold fish. Rebecca, this is your fault I told you not bring that cat in the house yesterday. Oh no wonder I'm about down in bed. Rebecca you're going to grow up to be a no good ne'er do well--just like your father.

REBECCA

Now look here, Aunt Miranda, I'm trying to be just as good as I know how to be, and I'll mind when I'm spoken to. You can shame me as long as I can stand it, but you mustn't call my father names. He was a perfectly lovely father and you have no right to call him names.

MIRANDA

Don't tell me. Your father was a weak vain man, and all he left your mother was a mortgage on the farm and fourteen children. Rebecca, I'm going to have to lay my hand down heavily on you. I don't believe in capital punishment but when you doubt my word, why I'll--

TOBY

(COMES BETWEEN THEM) Now see here, Miss Miranda, ~~kick her~~ whenever you feel that you want to take your spite out on Rebecca, you just hit me. My shoulders are broad and I can bear it I reckon. If you must strike some one --(HEROIC POSE) Strike me!

MIRANDA

All right! (BEATS TOBY OFF WITH A STICK. THEY ALL CHASE AFTER HER)

**** NUMBER THREE ****

DOCTOR

(ENTERS WITH MR. LADD) Well, Mr. Ladd, my little scheme is working. Old Miranda is changing every day. I don't think it will be any time at all before she will be letting us have that land for the new Orphan's home. I've got her scared to death.

MR. LADD

(NUDGING HIM) You kind of like taking care of her too, don't you. You sly old fox.' Aunt Miranda may be looking for a funeral but I think she's going to get a wedding instead.

DOCTOR

What about yourself? You and Rebecca are constantly together. Maybe wedding bells will be ringing for all of us, who knows? (TOBY ENTERS HOLDING HIS STOMACH) Well, Toby, what's the matter with you?

TOBY

I just come from Ma's birthday dinner. She had so much to eat we had some left over. For the first time we had more than we could eat. Mom sure is happy. Everybody in town most night give her something for her birthday.

MR. LADD

Did you enjoy your dinner, Toby?

TOBY

Gosh, I guess I did. I ate so much I had a headache and ma gave me some horse liniment. I had to hurry back to take care of the place. here, Boy, old Miranda sure is changed lately, aint she? She's even raise my salary a dollar. I'll bet if she 's stays sick another week I'll get ten bucks again. Hope she don't die until I get back up to ten dollars.

REBECCA

(ENTERS L. ASSISTING MIRANDA) Come along, Aunt Miranda, the doctor is here now, and he'll take care of you. (SEATS HER) There, dear.

MIRANDA

Thank you, Rebecca. Hello, Jeremiah!

DOCTOR

(PLEASED) Jeremiah! You haven't called me by my first name in twenty five years.

REBECCA

I must go in the house now and do the dishes. Mr. Ladd, do you want to help?

MR. LADD

Nothing would suit me any better? (THEY EXIT)

TOBY

Well, I guess I better get busy with the chores. Miss Sawyer, if you feel like you're gonna croak will you please write me a check for salary? (EXITS R.)

DOCTOR

Well, Miranda, how do you feel today?

MIRANDA

Oh just so so. I'm making out a deed for that property for the Orphan's home, Doctor, and I don't want any money. I'm giving it to them.

DOCTOR

Well, that's wonderful? Miranda. I'm glad your heart is turning! Every one is so much happier. Your niece seems to be a different little soul now that you treat her better.

MIRANDA

Oh she aint so bad. Yesterday morning when I came down, the shades were all up and there was a rearing fire in the stove, the coffee pot was scalded, and the doffee was ground, and the corn beef and the cold potatoes was sitting out in the chopping bowl, and a little note laying out in the table saying, "Love to Aunt Miranda" Why, my heart warmed right up to the little youngster. (CHANGES. SPEAKS SNAPPILY) Then what do you think she did?

DOCTOR

I don't know. What did she do?

MIRANDA

She left the kitchen door wide open and the cat was drinking out of the fresh milk that Toby had left sitting on the kitchen floor. We had to throw the whole thing out. What are you going to do with a harum scarum like that? But I love her and I'm going to leave her a lot of my money, and I'm going to send her mother the money to pay the mortgage off on the farm right today.

DOCTOR

Miranda, you're going to get well for doing all of these good things I believed. Do you know what made you get sick? Well, I'll tell you it was living this humdrum existence of yours. Old maids are never as healthy as married women. Now what you need, Miranda, is a new thrill a new sensation. You need some dashing man to put his arms around you. (PUTS ARMS AROUND HER) And pull you up to him, and take you like this (PUTS HAND ON HER LEG. SHE BEGINS TO GIGGLE) and then you just loosen up and let your conscience be your guide.--(THEY REAL CLOSE) Oh, don't that feel good!

MIRANDA

(SUDDENLY REALIZES WHAT SHE IS DOING) Say what are you talking about you old fool?

DOCTOR

(HOLDS HER HAND) Lovely hands you've got Miranda. (LOOKS AT HAND) If I'd a held that hand twenty five years ago, I'd have a full house by now!

MIRANDA

Oh, Doctor Putter, I think you're actually tryingg to propose to me. We'r too old.

DOCTOR

Ah, Miranda, you never get too old to try it. And something tells me you and I wouldn't have to try very hard.. What do you say?

MIRANDA

(BASHFUL) Oh, Doctor!

DOCTOR

Come into camp, you old battle axe! (THEY EMBRACE) (HEAVE BIG SIGH)

MIRANDA

(SIGHS) Oh!

DOCTOR

God! That feels good!

REBECCA

(ENTERS WITH MR. LADD) Oh Aunt Miranda, Mr. Ladd, wants to ask you something?

MR. LADD

Yes, Miranda--do you--would you--could we--may we--might we get married?

REBECCA

Say yes, Auntie!

MIRANDA

Very well, you may. We'll make it a double wedding!

REBECCA

Oh Mr. Ladd! (EMBRACE)

MR. LADD

My Rebecca.

MIRANDA

My Jerimiah.

DOCTOR

My M
iranda.

TOBY
(BUS.) He haw! He haw! He haw! (COUNT TIME) MY JACKASS!

F I N A L E